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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/267,398	03/15/1999	MASAHIRO SHIOJI	990264	6994

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EXAMINER

WHIPKEY, JASON T

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2612

DATE MAILED: 05/21/2004

24

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/267,398

Applicant(s)

SHIOJI ET AL.

Examiner

Jason T. Whipkey

Art Unit

2612

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 28 April 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-22 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 14-19 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 22 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13, 20 and 21 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 07 August 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- 1) ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - 2) ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - 3) ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on March 8, 2004, has been entered.

Response to Arguments

2. Applicant's arguments, see page 12, lines 1-5, filed March 8, 2004, with respect to the rejection of claims 1-13, 20, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(e), 103(a) have been fully considered and are persuasive. Therefore, the rejection has been withdrawn. However, upon further consideration, a new ground of rejection is made in view of Takemura.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

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4. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

5. Claims 1 and 8-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kato in view of Takemura.

Regarding claim 1, Kato discloses a camera system (Figure 1) including a video camera 10, a display unit 22, and a determination-designating unit 28 for designating an image area (column 5, lines 4-18). As shown in Figure 2, this image area is rectangular frame 44, which is smaller than display unit 22 and shows live image data captured by camera 10 (column 8, lines 36-39). Display unit 22 therefore also acts as a motion image display means.

Kato is silent with regard to establishing the frame by selecting a top left point and a bottom right point.

Takemura discloses an imaging device that allows a user to select a portion of a captured image, as shown in Figure 7. The user moves cursor 22 to a first position P1 and a second position P2 to establish the desired portion (column 9, lines 38-46). The camera stores the upper left corner and the lower right corner positions (column 10, lines 6-11).

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An advantage to choosing an upper left corner and a bottom right corner when selecting an area in a captured image is that operation is more intuitive, since English reading is performed left to right and top to bottom. For this reason, it would have been obvious at the time of invention to have Kato's camera prompt the operator for the upper left and lower right corners of the image area to be selected.

Regarding claim 8, a potential maximum visual field 42, which displays a still image held in storage unit 34 (Figure 2; column 8, lines 6-9), covers the screen. Storage unit 34 therefore acts as a recording medium, and its associated circuitry acts as a reproducing means. Using update designating unit 29, a user may request that the still image stored in memory be updated and re-read from memory (column 5, lines 15-18, and column 8, lines 12-19). Display unit 22 therefore forms and displays the stored still image.

Regarding claims 9 and 10, live-action frame 44 and still frame 42 may be displayed simultaneously (Figure 2) according to the manipulation of live-action frame 44 by the user via a mouse (column 7, lines 28-34, and column 8, lines 36-37).

Regarding claim 11, Kato teaches that while a user may move live-action frame 44, the still frame 42 in the background image will remain unchanged until the user requests a refresh (column 8, lines 10-14). After a still image is read from memory, the user is free to move live-action frame 44 around the screen (column 8, lines 12-24).

6. Claims 1-3 and 5-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sarbadhikari in view of Takemura.

Regarding claim 1, Sarbadhikari discloses a software-enhanced digital camera. As shown in Figure 2, the camera includes an exposure section 10 with an image sensor 12 (column 5, lines 59-61) and an electronic viewfinder 29 (column 7, lines 28-30). Digital processor 22 acts as a forming means and a motion image display means, as it provides images to viewfinder 29 (column 10, lines 30-36).

As shown in figures 8 and 9, the camera may be provided with a variety of templates that may surround a captured image (column 10, lines 24-28). A chosen template appears in viewfinder 29 to assist the user with framing an image that is to be inserted in the template (column 10, lines 39-43). As shown in Figure 9, the template fills the viewfinder's frame and surrounds a smaller user-captured image.

Additionally, Sarbadhikari claims in column 13, lines 3-6, an image sensing section "for electrically capturing an image provided by the optical section" and a signal processing section for processing this image. In lines 24-28 of the same column, this electrically captured image is combined with a pre-existing image file.

Still, Sarbadhikari is unclear as to whether or not the user-captured image is a moving image or a still image retrieved from memory.

However, since Sarbadhikari teaches the use of an electronic viewfinder — and considering that a viewfinder is only useful if it provides a constantly updated image, which allows the user to frame a shot — it would have been obvious for Sarbadhikari to combine the still template with a "live" image because such an operation would require less memory, since the user-captured image need not be stored in its full size before creating the synthesized image.

For this reason, it would have been obvious at the time of invention to have Sarbadhikari perform framing by using the live image captured by exposure section 10.

Sarbadhikari is silent with regard to establishing the frame by selecting a top left point and a bottom right point.

Takemura discloses an imaging device that allows a user to select a portion of a captured image, as shown in Figure 7. The user moves cursor 22 to a first position P1 and a second position P2 to establish the desired portion (column 9, lines 38-46). The camera stores the upper left corner and the lower right corner positions (column 10, lines 6-11).

An advantage to choosing an upper left corner and a bottom right corner when selecting an area in a captured image is that operation is more intuitive, since English reading is performed left to right and top to bottom. For this reason, it would have been obvious at the time of invention to have Kato's camera prompt the operator for the upper left and lower right corners of the image area to be selected.

Regarding claim 2, Sarbadhikari teaches that the template files are located on memory card 24 (column 10, lines 24-28). Included in the files are data indicating where the captured image will appear in relation to the displayed template image (column 10, lines 43-50). This information, which must inherently consist of size and position data, is therefore input from memory card 24. Digital processor 22 acts as a motion image frame forming means, as it provides images to viewfinder 29 (column 10, lines 30-36).

Regarding claim 3, Sarbadhikari shows in figures 8 and 9 that the frame containing the user-captured image is a rectangle. Since the camera is aware of where the user-captured image should be replaced with respect to the template (column 10, lines 43-50), it is inherent that at

least one vertex coordinate of the user-captured image area of the template is stored in memory card 24.

Regarding claim 5, Sarbadhikari teaches that memory card 24 stores captured image data files via interface 26 (column 6, lines 37-40 and 54-56). This data includes the data from the user-captured image area of viewfinder 29 (column 11, lines 9-13).

Regarding claim 6, Sarbadhikari teaches that image data are stored in image files via interface 26 (column 6, lines 37-40 and 54-56). It is inherent that these files include data from the user-captured area and some type of identifier, as the files would otherwise be useless to the camera.

Regarding claim 7, Sarbadhikari teaches that the camera may store a script that would direct the computer to correctly combine an image file and its associated template upon viewing, rather than storing the combined file (column 11, lines 5-9). Therefore, it is inherent that image size information is stored; otherwise, the template and captured image may not fit as the user specified.

7. Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sarbadhikari in view of Takemura and further in view of Shibata.

Claim 4 may be treated like claim 1. Additionally, Sarbadhikari teaches that a captured image may be reduced for display with the template (column 11, lines 1-3). However, Sarbadhikari is silent with regard to reducing a moving image before capture and placing it in template.

Shibata discloses a teleconferencing system with a screen layout such as the one shown in Figure 4(c). This figure shows a still picture received from a remote station displayed simultaneously with a moving image captured by a camera 1 (Figure 1) at the local station. The locally captured image is reduced in size by minor-frame address generator 309, which generates skipped addresses for readout to thin the moving picture data (column 10, lines 12-17).

An advantage to displaying a reduced-size moving image is that more pertinent data may be displayed on a screen while still giving the user a complete view of the image captured by a camera. For this reason, it would have been obvious at the time of invention to have Sarbadhikari use a moving image reduction system, such as the one described by Shibata.

8. Claims 12, 13, 20, and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kato in view of Sarbadhikari and further in view of Takemura.

Claim 12 may be treated like claim 9. However, Kato is silent with regard to recording an image in a monitor frame as displayed.

Sarbadhikari teaches that user-captured images may be combined with established templates to create a new file, as shown in figures 8 and 9 (column 11, lines 5-8). Image data files are stored in flash EPROM memory card 24 (column 6, lines 54-59) when a user is satisfied with the resulting image.

An advantage to storing an image displayed on a screen as an image file is that a user may view the exact image that is to be stored. This preview prevents undesirable images from being discovered later. For this reason, it would have been obvious at the time of invention to have Kato store an image file representative of a screen-displayed image.

Regarding claim 13, Sarbadhikari teaches that image data are stored in image files via interface 26 (column 6, lines 37-40 and 54-56). It is inherent that these files include data from the user-captured area and some type of identifier, as the files would otherwise be useless to the camera.

Regarding claim 20, Kato discloses a camera system (Figure 1) including a video camera 10, a display unit 22, and a determination-designating unit 28 for designating an image area, which acts as a setting means (column 5, lines 4-18). As shown in Figure 2, this image area is rectangular frame 44, which is smaller than display unit 22 and shows live image data captured by camera 10 in a synthesizing mode (column 8, lines 36-39).

Kato is silent with regard to using a digital camera with a recording mode and means and a reproducing mode.

Sarbadhikari teaches that user-captured images may be combined with established templates in a digital camera to create a new file, as shown in figures 8 and 9 (column 11, lines 5-8). Image data files are stored in flash EPROM memory card 24 (column 6, lines 54-59) when a user is satisfied with the resulting image. Images stored on memory card 24 may be browsed by the user (column 10, lines 58-63).

An advantage to storing images on a recording means and later reproduced is that images may be viewed and used at a later time without the need for separate viewing equipment. For this reason, it would have been obvious at the time of invention to have Kato's system include an image recording mode and means and a reproducing mode, such as those described by Sarbadhikari.

Kato is silent with regard to establishing the frame by selecting a top left point and a bottom right point.

Takemura discloses an imaging device that allows a user to select a portion of a captured image, as shown in Figure 7. The user moves cursor 22 to a first position P1 and a second position P2 to establish the desired portion (column 9, lines 38-46). The camera stores the upper left corner and the lower right corner positions (column 10, lines 6-11).

An advantage to choosing an upper left corner and a bottom right corner when selecting an area in a captured image is that operation is more intuitive, since English reading is performed left to right and top to bottom. For this reason, it would have been obvious at the time of invention to have Kato's camera prompt the operator for the upper left and lower right corners of the image area to be selected.

Regarding claim 21, Kato teaches that manipulation of live-action frame 44 may occur by the using determination-designating unit 28 (operated by the user and acting as a drawing means) to designate an image area (column 5, lines 4-18). A user may move live-action frame 44 using designating units 24 and 26, which act as position adjusting means (column 8, lines 10-14).

Allowable Subject Matter

9. Claim 22 is allowed.

No prior art could be located that teaches or fairly suggests a camera with a resizable frame designation that changes color when the user sizes it to a prescribed ratio.

Conclusion

10. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jason T. Whipkey, whose telephone number is (703) 305-1819. The examiner can normally be reached Monday through Friday from 9 A.M. to 6:30 P.M. eastern daylight time, alternating Fridays off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Wendy R. Garber, can be reached on (703) 305-4929. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 872-9314 for regular communication and (703) 872-9315 for After Final communication.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Technology Center 2600 Customer Service Office, whose telephone number is (703) 306-0377.

Response to this action should be mailed to:

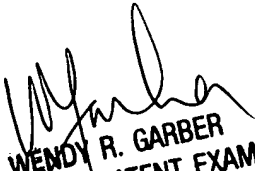
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or faxed to the appropriate number above for communications intended for entry. (For informal or draft communications, please label "**PROPOSED**" or "**DRAFT**".)

Hand-delivered responses should be brought to the sixth floor receptionist of Crystal Park II, 2121 Crystal Drive in Arlington, Virginia.

JTW

JTW
May 17, 2004


WENDY R. GARBER
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2600